



Headquarters 139th Regiment (Combat Arms) North Carolina Military Academy



382nd PAD — February 10, 2007

Change of Command for the 139th

Story by Cadet Glenn Draughon



The official party of the Headquarters, 139th Regiment (CA) change of command ceremony at Ft. Bragg, N.C. on Feb. 10. The incoming commander is LTC(P) Gary A. Thompson. Photo by Staff Sgt. Craig Norton.

Ft. Bragg, NC—Lt. Col.(P) Gary A. Thompson took over as Commandant of the Headquarters 139th Regiment (Combat Arms) Feb. 10 during a change of command ceremony held in the main lobby of the North Carolina Military Academy. He replaces Col. Beverly Brockman who will take over as the Deputy, United States Property and Fiscal Office (USPFO) for the North Carolina National Guard effective Mar. 1, 2007.

During Brockman's time as commander, the 139th exceeded the Guard Bureau's mission requirements and the academy had no significant injuries to students or staff. When asked what her biggest accomplishment was during her command she said, "Putting the right soldiers in the right positions." Brockman leaves the unit with mixed emotions but is confident in the abilities of Thompson. During the ceremony, Brockman received a Meritorious Service Medal for her duties at the 139th.

Thompson comes to the 139th from the Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) J3 section where he served as Team Chief for Mobilization and Readiness. Thompson began his military career in 1969 as an infantryman on active duty with the U.S. Army where he served in Vietnam. He received his com-

mission from Ft. Benning, Ga in 1980 and branched Armor. Thompson served as armor platoon leader in companies A and C of the 2nd Battalion, 252nd Armor and as the company commander for companies B and C of the 2nd Battalion 252nd Armor.

Thompson was commander of 1/252 Armor during the 30th BCT's deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). He received the Bronze Star for exceptional meritorious service during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

During his remarks to the crowd, Thompson personally thanked several general officers for their support and for the opportunities they presented him. Also in attendance were several of his subordinates who served with Thompson in Iraq. When asked what he hoped to bring to the academy he said there was already a good plan in place but expects new training requirements to be implemented soon. Thompson said, "I feel confident that we will meet these requirements."

Thompson has earned the Combat Infantry Badge and the Combat Action Badge, which he received at the ceremony. He is married to the former Janice Gordon and has two children, David and Elizabeth.

Brig. Gen. Thomas Lawing presents Lt. Col.(P) Gary A. Thompson a Combat Action Badge during the change of command ceremony at Headquarters 139th Regiment (CA), Ft. Bragg. He earned the badge for service during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Photo by Staff Sgt. Craig Norton.



NCMA Kicks Off 50th OCS

Story by Spc Melissa Strickland

The North Carolina Military Academy at Fort Bragg launched its 50th year of Officer Candidate School (OCS) with a Pre-OCS orientation and ceremony for candidates and their families Feb. 10, 2007. The latest class, OCS-50, consists of 47 soldiers from a variety of backgrounds, each with their own reason for taking on the 18-month course.

“Some of our candidates come straight from basic training,” said Capt. James Felts, a teach-assess-coach (TAC) officer with the Military Academy. “Others have been in the National Guard for years and

are already non-commissioned officers. They are all different, but it is our job to get them on the same plane.”

One of the more seasoned candidates is Johnny Young, who has been in the North Carolina National Guard for more than eight years and spent nearly a year as a chaplain’s assistant in Iraq in 2004.

“I signed on to this program because I wanted to do something more,” said Young. “Even though I have been in the Guard for awhile, I feel like this is a first step in my military career.”

The candidates are beginning at Phase zero, which lasts from February until May. During this part of the training, the Soldiers are gradually initiated into the OCS program and given the skills and equipment they need to successfully complete the next portion. Phase one is an intensive, two-week training at Eastover, S.C., where candidates are schooled in leadership, counseling, map reading, and land navigation. They then begin a series of 14 weekend drill periods at Ft. Bragg for Phase 2, where subjects covered include tactics, military law, communications, effective writing,

The OCS-50 class recited the Officer Candidate Creed together during their “crossover” ceremony at the North Carolina Military Academy in Fort Bragg, N.C., February 10, 2007. The ceremony marked the transition from enlisted to officer candidate for the 47 Soldiers. Photo by Spc. Jessica Dahlberg, 382nd PAD.



personnel management, and other core subjects. The program ends with Phase three, two weeks at Fort McClellan, Ala., where patrolling and tactics are the central focus.

The Soldiers are guided through this rigorous and rewarding program by a team of dedicated instructors, each with years of experience leading troops.

“We select only the finest captains with outstanding leadership abilities,” said Capt. Daniel Whiteford, an OCS instructor. “In our current operational environment, it is important that we have our best leaders of today training our leaders of tomorrow.”

1st Lt. Kathy Swistak, who graduated from the OCS program in 1998, said the caliber of the trainers at the Military Academy makes for a tough but rewarding experience for the candidates.

“It was the best thing I have ever done,” said Swistak. “It is also what I am most proud of in my life. To me, graduating from OCS was more meaningful than graduating from college.”

Though they have a long way to go before reaching their own graduation, OCS-50 students were given the opportunity to participate in a “crossover” ceremony in front of friends and family. Lt. Col. Mark Teachey, the general studies battalion commander, told the candidates to treasure this day as a special event in their lives.

“I remember being in the same chair you are in today,” said Teachey. “This program is not a cakewalk, but I can tell you that the OCS course was the foundation for where I am in my life and career.”

For the first time ever, the ceremony included having the

Soldiers step over a gold bar as a symbol of their transition from the enlisted ranks to officer candidates after receiving a copy of the Officer Candidate’s Creed. Teachey also gave the group a top ten list of tips to help them achieve success in the program, including “Lead every chance you get. You want opportunities to make mistakes” and “Don’t sacrifice the team for your own gain.”

The Soldiers then joined Teachey in reciting the Officer Candidate’s Creed, described as a symbol of sacrifice and the final commitment to leaving the enlisted ranks to become a National Guard officer.

Having gotten a taste of the pride that comes from completing the OCS program, the candidates were dismissed to prepare for their first challenge—a PT test at 6:30 a.m. Sunday.

Academy Has Rich History

Story by Sgt. Robert Jordan & Spc. Lynn Wilson

The North Carolina Military Academy (NCMA) continues to evolve from its modest beginnings to a world class facility. The Academy is home to the North Carolina National Guard’s Officer Candidate School, several MOS qualification courses and specialized training.

The NCMA began in 1958 housed in six World War II temporary buildings supplied by Third Army on Ft. Bragg. Maj. William P. Keeton was given the responsibility of staffing the academy which would provide junior officers in a post-WW II era for the North Carolina Army

National Guard.

The academy struggled under the inherent problems of the outdated facilities. The problems included environmental hazards of lead paint, asbestos and a lack of insulation. “There was a tremendous cost every year and high maintenance costs due to the age of the facilities,” said Master Sgt. Elsa Gaver, Quality Assurance.

In the 1980’s the NCNG Facilities Management realized the need for a new facility and began planning for future construction. The current facility was built in three phases beginning in 2001 and completed in 2006, costing

the government \$30 million.

Phase one consisted of barracks, classrooms, a dining facility and supply areas. Phase two continued with the building of more barracks, an administration center, classrooms and a reference room. Phase three, completed in 2006, brought the Academy more offices, barracks and an auditorium.

The North Carolina Military Academy is not just facilities, but also instructors and support staff, making the NCMA world class. “Not everyone can be an instructor,” said Master Sgt. Steven M.

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A group of potential students their family inspect training equipment including tents, inclined sit up benches, pull up bars and the "punishment pit," a mulch lined area where remedial training is held in front of student barracks at the North Carolina Military Academy at Ft. Bragg, Feb. 10. Photo by Sgt. Robert Jordan.

Annis, Course Manager, "it takes a special kind of soldier."

Annis said the dedication and commitment of the staff is unbelievable. The staff puts in at least two drill weekends every month to do what is needed to make this Academy a success.

Annis came to the Academy in 1991 as an instructor and moved his way through the rank structure, reaching his current title in 2001.

He oversees the entire curriculum making sure it follows the current standard to keep the Academy accredited.

A broad range of classes are taught on-site year round attracting students from across the region. "The NCMA is a Regional Training Institute for the South Eastern U.S.," said Capt. Daniel Whiteford, OCS Instructor. "We teach MOS (Military Occupational Specialty)

qualification from Field Artillery, Medical, Engineering to Infantry."

Active, Guard and Reserve students train together at the Academy to the same standard. "Ft. Benning sets the OCS Curriculum, we manage within it and try to make better leaders," said Whiteford. With so many students and hundreds of hours of instruction per week the facility is active non-stop, "any time, all week, all day long every day we are teaching students," said Whiteford.

The courses currently offered at the Academy are Basic and Advanced Non-Commissioned Officers Courses and MOS training for the different artillery career fields, along with the Total Army Instructor Training Course, Small Group Training Course and many others. The Academy has also recently added MOS courses for truck drivers and vertical and horizontal engineers. There will soon be courses available the infantry and military police.

Gaver started at the old academy and saw the evolution from modest beginnings to world class facility, "we now have a facility to match the quality of our training."

